

The year was 1992. I was sitting in the waiting room at a doctor's office. I was working on my undergraduate degree at Carson Newman College at the time and had been seeing the school's Licensed Clinical Social Worker on a regular basis. I was nervous, confused, embarrassed and experiencing a range of other emotions as I sat there awaiting the doctor to come in.

Finally he came through the door. I sat helpless on the examination table. The shame welled up inside of me at the thought to myself, "Here I am a preacher and depressed. I must tell him I need help with depression so he can prescribe the right type of depression medication." The doctor sat in his chair and wheeled over to me. I thought my heart and head would explode with shame. He asked, "What kind of problem are you having?" I answered, "I am seeing the school counselor and he recommended that I see you for depression medication."

It was 1972. This year would be the most painful in my life. Little did I know or ever want to know how my life would be disrupted.

The best I can remember, it was a hot summer day. I was outside playing and enjoying being a 6 year old. As I was playing in the large field in my neighborhood, I noticed my father's white 67' Chevrolet sitting in the driveway. A sense of panic came over me. My father was a self-employed barber and was rarely home during the day. It had to be a rare occasion for my father to be home, and the first thought that came to my mind was, "I'm caught!"

As a 6 year old, I would often misbehave. With my dad being home, I knew I had been caught stealing. The inevitable happened. My father stepped on the porch and waved for me to come home. My heart sank!

"Sit down, son," said my father. There were three chairs. I sat in the middle chair. I was breathing rapidly from running. I looked at my father whom I loved and respected and said, "What?" The expression on his face revealed to me a more serious message than I originally thought. Dad looked at me for what seemed to be eternity and said, "Your mother and I are getting a divorce. Who do you want to live with?." Those words crushed my spirit. Immediately, hope for living began to diminish like air slowly leaking out of a balloon. I thought for a moment about the situation and concluded to stay with my mother.

Another tragedy happened. I experienced an intense, deep throbbing pain. As an ten year old, I never felt pain this deeply and intensely. I felt grown up instantly. All the burden, weight, and cares of this world, life and living were suddenly thrust upon my shoulders. I was exposed and thrust into an adult role.

This whole situation took two minutes. Ten minutes prior I was a normal 10 year old. Now my life was shattered and fragmented into pieces that only God could restore. One of my favorite verses of scripture is Psalm 147:3, which states, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Because of the intense pain I experienced at that moment and later in life beginning as a teenager, God has given me a heart and deep desire to help people who are hurting, regardless of how they got that way and what they are going through.

I was confused, scared, and uncertain of the future. I remember going outside to play after talking with my dad. We lived in the housing projects, and as I was going outside, the screen door slammed. Immediately, Satan puts his thoughts into my brain, "It's your fault. You caused their divorce; God created you with a defect; there is something wrong with you; you cannot trust adults." These lies would almost destroy my life.

My teen years, beginning at 14, were depressed years. A simple definition of depression is anger turned inward. Because of the rejection I faced as an eight year old, whose parents separated, the hurt and pain was intense. Since I obviously could not change my parents by making them get back together nor did I know how to resolve my pain, I turned my anger inward and by the time I was 14 the depression was full blown. I had symptoms of:

- Sadness all the time.
- Feelings of loneliness all the time.

- Sleep disturbances. I rarely slept all night.
- Muscle aches and pains continually.
- Suicidal thoughts.
- Doubted my self worth and abilities continually.
- Exhausted all the time.
- Negative thinking continually.
- Guilty feelings all the time.
- Irritability all the time.
- Difficulty concentrating all the time.
- Anxious most of the time.
- Emptiness all the time.
- Feelings of worthlessness all the time.
- Feelings of helplessness all the time.
- Feelings of hopelessness all the time.
- Pessimistic all of the time.
- Consistently made wrong decisions.

Satan and his demons had spun a web of deceit that had me bound to these symptoms and many others. Because I had pain and did not know how to resolve it, I drifted in an aimless direction searching for release.

By the time I was 16, I began to smoke marijuana and drink alcohol to numb the pain. Please keep in mind that when people are wounded they struggle with addiction. I was struggling with clinical levels of Adjustment Disorder with Depressed Mood, Bereavement, Major Depressive Disorder – Recurrent, Dissociative Identity Disorder, formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Prolonged Depressive Reaction and Rational Emotive Therapy. Even though I was only treated for depression and rational emotive symptoms, these other areas were a major battle in my life of masking the pain instead of dealing with the root issue(s).

Drugs, alcohol and rebellion only sent me into a deeper spiral of hopelessness and helplessness. “Is there a way out of this misery,” I would often think to myself.

By the time I was age 18, the pain was almost unbearable. I would go home for lunch, get high on drugs and go back to school. In many classes, I would sleep because I was drugged. However, God saw my misery and sent help. A friend named Randy Slone invited me to church. He was teaching that night and wanted to know if I would go with him. I agreed. God spoke to my heart and I went forward during the invitation. I dealt with my sins and began to walk in God’s Truth. Praise His name the burden’s were gone - - at least some of them were.

At age 20, I married a sweet country girl who is gracious and charming. I have told her many times that God sent her to melt my cold heart. She was and is such an inspiration in my life.

A few months after marriage, God began dealing with my life about preaching. I did not want to preach. Most preachers I knew were poor and miserable. I did not want to be poor. I was already miserable. Before marriage, I dropped out of college. I was majoring in electrical engineering and was offered a sales job making a lot of money. By the time I was age 25, I was making \$54,000 per year. I had a goal of retiring as a millionaire by age 40. However, God had different plans for my life.

I was still battling depression, etc. on the inside. At age 22, I surrendered to preach but the battles with depression, etc. continued. I was trying desperately to figure out what was wrong with me.

By this time, I was on a performance trap as far as relationships were concerned. I did not preach until 6 months after I first announced my call. My first sermon was entitled, “Six Things

God Hates,” found in Proverbs 6:16-19. I preached for 15 minutes and sat down. I was so nervous! A man came up and said, “I like that kind of preaching - - short and sweet.” He meant it not as a compliment. More embarrassment and shame followed.

In 1986, I assumed a part-time position of Youth Pastor. My performance increased. I became more of a phony and I neither struggled to fit in because I did not know my identity in Christ nor how my formal name of Rickey Allen gave direction and meaning to my life. I struggled endlessly to be who, and all God wanted me to be. By April 1990, I resigned. I could no longer perform for acceptance nor could I live in a way that was not in keeping with whom God created me to be.

After resigning, I began to dig deeper into my problems to try to understand what was going on in my life. For about one year, I read all the material I could find on how to deal with and overcome my problems but I still was not released from my bondage.

I reached a point in my life in which I thought praying for one hour per day would somehow release me from depression. One day while praying, I was lying on the floor in a restaurant praying. I had my Bible open and I was Scripture praying. As I was praying, I told God, “If You do not release me from my depression I am through with You!” Immediately, I opened my eyes and looked at my open Bible. It was open to Jeremiah chapter 29. I read a few verses and verses 13 and 14 leapt out at me. These verses state the following:

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.”

I became angrier with God. How could God tell me “...search for me with all your heart,” when I was on my stomach in a restaurant praying “with all my heart?” How much more was God asking of me? I could not hold on much longer nor could I give much more of myself to God or anyone else. My circus act of performing was about to come to an end. It did end in March 1993 when God finally released me from 16 years of clinical depression. Praise His Name!

As I struggled inwardly with fear, worry, doubt, confusion, depression, and uncertainty about the future, I continued seeking God for answers. Well meaning people gave advice of “pray more,” “read your Bible more,” “witness more,” “Give more of your money to God,” and “memorize more Scripture.” Those people, well meaning in their intentions, were only telling what they heard. However, this counsel only put me into further bondage because it is “performance based living.”

My heart yearned for deliverance and freedom. Where is the victory? Where is the freedom? I thought God could and would help me with my problems. **The proof was not in the pudding for me! As a matter of fact, the pudding I was eating tasted awful.** Many others have shared these same struggles. One such person is Mike Quarles. Mike was a legalistic preacher who became a drunk, discovered grace, and was set free. Mike states in his book, “The Key to the Victorious Christian Life,” p.2 the following:

So Much Promised, So Little Realized

Among evangelicals there is a general consensus as to salvation. Most of us agree it is by faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross plus nothing. But when it comes to sanctification, i.e., personal growth and maturity, there are as many answers as there are denominations. We know how to deal with sins committed, but we do not know what to do about sin in the life of a believer.

Strangely enough, I have found very few believers, including missionaries, preachers and officers in the church, who have a clear idea of sanctification. In practice this means that Christians with life-controlling problems and besetting sins are not getting much help or finding an answer to their problem. Why is this? Are we not promised abundant life (John 10:10), victory (2 Cor. 2:14), and power to more that overcome all our problems (Rom. 8:37)? There is a large chasm between what we are promised and what we are experiencing.

Notice Mike's last sentence, "There is a large chasm between what we are promised and what we are experiencing." I tried:

1. Alcohol
2. Drugs
3. Sleep – 12 hours per day or more
4. Pornography
5. Rebellion
6. Pride
7. Going to church – every time the doors were open (At times I went even when I thought the church should have been open.)
8. More Bible reading
9. More witnessing
10. More giving
11. More memorization
12. More self-control
13. More prayer – prayed 1 hour every day
14. Led more people to Christ than the pastor
15. Read more and more books
16. Only associated with Christian people
17. Majored in psychology
18. Majored in religion
19. Saw three Christian counselors for talk therapy
20. Analyzed my past
21. Shared my burdens with others
22. My wife and I prayed consistently for deliverance and freedom from depression.
23. Fasted some
24. Depression medication – 4 different types
25. Public confession to become a better servant of God – many times.
26. Rigid schedule to accomplish more
27. Thousands of hours studying principles, truths, etc.
28. Memorized chapters of the Bible
29. Promises to God
30. Promises to others
31. Sought God's will daily
32. Tried to become Charles Stanley and every other person whom I admired
33. Took everyone's advice
34. Conformed to the crowd I was with
35. Blamed others for my situation
36. Suicide – seriously considered it twice

Nothing worked for me! I was age 27, miserable and on the verge of turning my back on God because He was not coming through for me as He apparently had for others. I closely examined others to determine why they were not experiencing problems as I was experiencing them. Other Christians seemed to be doing fine. They had a normal childhood growing up with parents, who loved each other, had plenty of money, popularity, etc. **I had none of these!** My life was numb, void, useless, and becoming more and more out of control. Where was my joy? Where was my peace? Where was my comfort? Where was God and why was He not coming through for me? Where was the power He promised for freedom and victorious living? Mike Quarles further states:

“I am personally aware of Christians who have struggled with alcoholism drug addiction, homosexuality, adultery, sexual deviation, depression, etc. All of those I have in mind were “committed Christians” in strong evangelical churches who had been Christians ten years or more. Not a few of them were pastors and missionaries. Personally I struggled with alcoholism for five years after I left the pastorate. I was a seminary graduate, had read hundreds of Christian books, attended countless seminars and conferences, and had seen numerous counselors, but no one had an answer for me. Is there an answer? Is a victorious Christian life possible? Are we missing something? Is there a key, an essential to the abundant, Spirit-filled, and victorious Christian life? I believe the answer to these questions is yes! But first a closer look at the problem.

What was my problem? I thought that I knew it was my depression. I am reminded of what Christian psychologist Bill Gillham says:

“The problem is you don’t know what your problem is. You think your problem is your main problem, but that’s not the problem at all. The problem is you don’t know what your problem is and that’s your main problem!”

My main problem was that I did not know what my main problem was. I thought my main problem was depression and could be resolved by trying the 36 previous items. Was I ever wrong? I was struggling with depression and seeking an instantaneous cure. In the book, “Counseling the Depressed,” pp. 32-33, Archibald D. Hart, PhD, states the following:

“I like to view the various understandings of healing as having several levels. This model has helped me to understand my role as a Christian psychologist better, and it may be helpful to you.”

Level 1: God Heals through Miraculous Interventions

At this level, God clearly cuts across nature and performs a dramatic and supernatural (by our understanding) change in some diseased condition, moving it towards health. An example of this would be a person who clearly has a cancerous growth one minute and no evidence of it the next. Or it could be a blatant schizophrenic, screaming and acting inappropriately one moment, which is totally calm and fully recovered the next. This is the healing advocated in James 5:14,15, “... and the prayer of faith shall save the sick.”

I believe that this level of healing is provided as God's prerogative. He chooses when and where it is granted.

Level 2: God Heals through the Resources of the Gospel

Here, healing is provided through facilitation of natural processes by the use of supernatural resources. God, in a sense, cooperates with nature but the resources used by the Christian are supernatural.

In the Christian's life, the indwelling Christ works to heal memories, enable forgiveness, overcome fearfulness, and free us from cravings and strong desires. The resources of prayer, Scripture, and the power of the Holy Spirit enable a healing process to take place. James 5:16 suggest this, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Confession of faults to one another is closely akin to Christian counseling and we do this with prayer so as to be healed.

I believe that this level of healing is the prerogative of every Christian.

Level 3: Healing Is Effected through "Christianly" Living

Good, clean living, the avoidance of damaging substances, diet control, proper sleep, good stress management, and living at peace with God and others facilitates natural healing. Much "counseling" operates at this level of healing.

This is the prerogative of every person (not just Christians). It is merely the sensible application of God's rules for living. In a non-Christian, this level does not effect complete healing, but it does relieve much suffering.

Level 4: Healing through Human Interventions with Nature

This level of healing is primarily that provided by medical science. By supplementing deficiencies, surgically removing clogged arteries or diseased organs, or using antibiotics to aid the body's immune system, we bring about healing by intervening or supplementing nature.

This level of healing is also available to all of God's creation. As Christians, we ought to allow and be open to all four levels of healing. They are all appropriate and valid. While we pray for and trust God to intervene, we also utilize other levels. I like to think that level 2 is always available in Christian counseling as a birthright for all believers.

I have personally counseled many people stuck in the same way as I was, looking for an instant cure. Where does this thinking come from? I believe it comes from how we are first introduced to the Gospel. I have heard people say, "just get saved and everything will be all right." Others have said, "Invite Jesus into your heart and all your problems will be gone." Still some have said, "Jesus is all you need. He will fix all your problems." Jesus is presented, by some well-meaning but misinformed people, as a live-in problem solver. God came to earth in the flesh to destroy the works of the enemy so we could have a deep, intimate relationship with Him now (Acts 26:18, Jm. 3:16) not necessarily to be a live-in problem solver. This thinking has its roots in dichotomists' view of man.

Dr. Richard Arno, Psy. D. of the National Christian Counselors Association in his book "Temperament Theory," pp. 7-8, states about the inner man the following:

“Many authors and theologians have spent countless hours writing hundreds of books, theses and dissertations in an attempt to clarify the mystery concerning the inner man. This is a very complex subject, and anyone who attempts to explain it is usually accused of over simplifying or over complicating the subject. Nevertheless, the mystery of man’s soul and spirit is quite significant in regard to the theory of temperament.

Two major schools of thought or theological doctrine concerning the inner man are the Dichotomists and the Trichotomists.

DICHOTOMISTS

Dichotomists believe there are only two essential elements in the constitution or makeup (the natural state of body or mind) of man:

- a. **The body** – formed from the dust of the earth.
- b. **The soul** – or principle of life. (Genesis 2:7)

They believe the soul to be the origin or source of the **whole** life, whether that life is man or beast, and that it is the principle of all life: physical, intellectual, moral, religious. That is, there is not one substance, the soul, which feels and remembers, and another substance, the spirit, which has conscience and the knowledge of God.

Dichotomists believe and teach that man is made up of two distinct parts: **the body**, which, of course, is the physical, and the soul, which includes the inner man in his entirety (will, emotions, intellect, etc.). They believe that the spirit is simply the higher order or part of man’s soul. The dividing factor between man and animal is that an animal has **ONLY** a lower soul, whereas man has both a lower soul and a higher soul.

“Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?” (Ecclesiastes 3:21)

TRICHOTOMISTS

In support of their belief that man is a triune being, **Trichotomists** quote, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (I Thessalonians 5:23) They believe there are three essential parts or elements of man’s constitution or makeup.

- a. **The body** is the material (physical) part of man.
- b. **The soul** is the principle of animal life (man possesses it in common with animals) and to it belongs understanding, emotion and sensibility.
- c. **The spirit** is the mind, the principle of man’s rational and immortal life, and the possessor of reason, will and conscience.

God created man by enlivening inorganic matter that He had formed into a body by breathing a rational spirit into the body (Genesis 2:7). At death the body returns to the dust of the earth from which it came and the spirit returns unto God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

The soul of life in an animal is **only** the **animal** soul. It is physical and material in nature, but perishes with the body in which it is the vital life principle. However, in man the difference is that the rational soul is a higher principle that was **breathed** by the Creator, thus making man in His image.”

Moreover, the New Testament model for man is Trichotomy (1 Thes. 5:23) not dichotomy. Friends who choose to cling to the dichotomists view have narrowed God down to working a certain way - instantaneous and everything is related to salvation. I know of one preacher who was “saved” seven, yes, I said seven times. He had struggles he could not resolve and he thought he never accepted Christ as Lord and Savior because he continued to struggle. I have personally talked with many other Christians who went through the motions of salvation to remove their problem(s) to no avail. Why does God not remove our problems at the new birth experience? The answer is He does – He removes the main problem. The main problem is our inability to have a deep, abiding love- relationship with Him because of sin. Sin is everything God is not. God has forgiven all past, present, and future sin, “having forgiven you all trespasses,” Col. 1:13. Therefore, the main problem of sin separating us from God’s love has been eliminated – Praise God!

Why do we continue to have problems? The answer is simple. Dr. Neil Anderson of Freedom in Christ ministry states, “[w]hen you were born again, God gave you a new nature and you became a new person, but nobody pressed the “CLEAR” button in your brain...” “Victory Over the Darkness, p. 159. The battle is for the brain. The brain is the main control center of all we think, say and do and contains our flesh patterns. Dr. Bill Gillham in, “Lifetime Guarantee,” p. 9, states “[f]lesh refers to the old ways or patterns by which you have attempted to get all your needs [security, acceptance, and worth] supplied instead of seeking Christ and trusting Him to meet your needs.”

I previously mentioned about my life and being performance based. Well, my flesh patterns were programmed to perform and to perform well. I personally believe most people in church today are living a life of performance based relating and are lacking an experience of grace.

Once again, I want to quote Mike Quarles. He states the following on page 4:

“One of the greatest misconceptions in the church today is that doing, i.e. performing certain activities or behaving the right way, will bring about the desired change and enable us to grow spiritually. Most programs are designed so that the person will perform such activities as Bible reading, prayer, Bible memory, having a quiet time, witnessing, church attendance, etc. While these are all good in themselves, it must be recognized that all of them can be performed in the energy of the flesh, that is, in our own strength and wisdom, the resources of "self." Martin Luther, from his perspective as a monk and heavy works-righteousness orientation had this to say:”

“It does not help the soul if the body is occupied with sacred duties, or prays, fasts, abstains from certain kinds of food or does any work that can be done...since the things which have been mentioned could be done by any wicked person. Such works produce nothing but hypocrites”³

It seems that the majority of our discipleship programs today with their emphasis on performance are simply monasticism in evangelical dress. They do not accomplish the desired

result, but in most cases simply strengthen the self-life. Most are structured so that only those who are orderly, well disciplined and diligent will succeed. Those with serious life-controlling problems do not find much help in the evangelical church today. In large part, the church has defaulted to the world and those with deep problems are sent to psychiatrists and secular treatment centers.

Dr. Charles Solomon questions this when he says:

“If I understand the Bible correctly, the abundant life and anxiety are mutually exclusive, as Paul wrote, “Be anxious for nothing...and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6,7). All Christians enjoy peace with God through redemption, but relatively few enjoy the peace of God. It is this peace that the neurotic or psychotic person is desperate to know. It is likewise this peace that the so-called well-adjusted person needs, even though he usually does not understand that he has a problem until his comfortable world begins to fall apart at the seams.”⁴

Let’s look at this problem honestly. Is there a victory apart from performance? The answer is yes!

Adam and Eve enjoyed 100% acceptance, security and significance because they were always in God’s presence (Gen. 3:9). They were created complete. The Fall meant they were now at 0% acceptance, security, and significance. Now they faced deficit needs for the first time in their life. The relationship with God was completely severed. Their struggles were directly linked to the fact they no longer were 100% accepted, secure, and significance. The new birth restores the relationship with God but we are still stuck at 0% in acceptance, security, and significance. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth – Jn 16:13, leads the believer in the direction from 0% to 100%. Even though we will never arrive at 100%, God’s Spirit continuously takes us in the direction of meeting our deepest needs of acceptance, security, and significance. Therefore, the victory for the Christian is found in death. So many people have been trying to die not realizing they are already dead in Christ (Col. 3:3). This death means an end to striving to be accepted, secure, and to feel important because we are now complete in Him (Col. 2:10). As I allow the Holy Spirit to take me to God in the midst of my situation, God shows me I am accepted, secure, and important. As I begin to experience God in the midst of my circumstances, He either removes my current problem or raises me above my problem so that it no longer affects me negatively; and He gives me “...the peace of God, which passeth all understanding...” (Phil. 4:7)

God’s way of deliverance, freedom, victory and triumph over life’s struggles is very different than what most people realize. God has already accomplished our deliverance, freedom, victory and triumph through His Son. In other words, it is a done deal. Our co-crucifixion enables us to tap into His deliverance, freedom, victory and triumph. How is this done? Co-crucifixion means a joint death. If you and I were co-owners in a business venture, it means we own it jointly. When Jesus died on the cross, He somehow placed each person, through His foreknowledge of who would accept Him as Savior, with Him on the cross. Stated differently, He died to sin’s power. We died to sin’s power – Romans 6:9 states “[n]ow if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:”

What did Christ die to? He died to sin’s power as He died for our sins. If He did not die to sin’s power, He would continually have to die for sins. Thank God, it was accomplished the first time.

Moreover, our co-crucifixion accomplished other important truths we need to know and live out in our daily experiences. They are as follows:

Co-crucifixion	“...dead to sin...”	Romans 6:2
	“...baptized into his death...”	Romans 6:3
	“...we also should walk in newness of life...”	Romans 6:4
Co-crucifixion and Co-resurrection	“[f]or if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:”	Romans 6:5
Co-crucifixion	“[K]nowing this that our old man is crucified with him...”	Romans 6:6
	“...we should not serve sin.”	Romans 6:6
	“...he that is dead is freed from sin.”	Romans 6:7
New and Victorious Life. Co-life with Christ in victory over Each and every Problem.	“...dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live with him.”	Romans 6:8
	“...dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”	Romans 6:11
	“[I]et not sin therefore reign [rule]...”	Romans 6:12
	“...sin shall not have dominion over you...”	Romans 6:14
	“[b]eing then made free from sin, ye become the servants of righteousness.”	Romans 6:18

Jesus’ death accomplished a wonderful work of freedom. He freed us from the penalty of past sins that have been committed and our death with Him freed us from sin in our own life. How? Death terminates a relationship but not existence. It is a biblical fact we died with Christ and it is a biblical fact we died to sin. Celebrate your victory in Him! We now have a new past, present and future. The old sin – loving, selfish, meet-my-needs-my-way person is dead and everything about him. I Cor. 5:17 states:

“[t]herefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Mike Quarles quotes John Murray in, “Principles of Conduct,” p. 204, as saying the following:

“Regeneration is basically therefore an act of God through the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit operative in man (Col.2:13), originating in him a new dimension of moral life, a resurrection to new life in Christ. This new life is not merely a neutral state arising out of forgiveness of sin, but a positive implantation of Christ’s righteousness in man, by which he is quickened (John 5:21), and given a new life (Rom. 6:4). Regeneration involves an illumination of the mind, a change in the will, and a renewed nature. It extends to the total nature of man, irrevocable altering his governing disposition and restoring him to a true experiential knowledge in Christ. It is a partaking of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) ... When a person dies we know from bitter experience that the bond that united that person to life and

activity in this world has been severed. He is no longer active in the sphere, realm or relationship in reference to which he has died; he is no longer in rapport here.”⁵

If co-crucifixion is the key to victory for the Christian, some questions need to be asked and answered.

First, co-crucifixion means a joint death with Jesus. However, what died when we were co-crucified with Christ? Put simply, everything about you that was unholy. Since God restores us perfectly (Col. 2:11), everything that is unholy has been and is gone. The Apostle Paul refers to it as the old man. Paul states in Romans 6:6, “[k]nowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” The old man is the person who was a spirit-son of Satan and programmed to think, act, and behave according to the Prince-of-the-Air because of being taken captive by Him at His will (II Tim. 2:26). In order to understand the old man more clearly, other names are used by the Bible to mean old man. They are as follows:

Old Nature Adamic Nature Natural Man Sinner in Adam

These names all mean the same and they refer to the person we were before Christ.

Secondly, if we died with Christ, what did we die to? These glorious truths are so liberating. We died to sin (Romans 6:2), the law and all its binding-legalistic rules (Romans 7:4,6), and the world with all its lusts (Gal. 6:14, Col. 2:20).

Death to the world means we no longer look to the world to meet our needs. Their standards of acceptance, approval, security, and worth do not apply to my life. Therefore, I am no longer under obligation to try to please others and win their approval and acceptance to validate me as a person. That person is dead because of co-crucifixion.

Death to the standards of the law mean I no longer need to try to measure up to God’s perfect and holy standard. I already measure up in Christ (Col. 2:10,13).

Last, death to sin means the power of indwelling sin no longer rules or reigns in my life. It does not mean I will never sin, but I can now say no to the power of sin indwelling in my brain because of the lies I believe about my formal name, temperament and identity in Christ.

Christians struggle, in part, because of not knowing that we have died to sin and are co-resurrected to a new life. This new life is not a “changed life, but an “exchanged” live.” Steve McVey, in Grace Land, p. 67, states:

“[t]o say that one becomes a different person when he becomes a Christian doesn’t mean that he has been simply changed. It means that his old life has been exchanged for a new on – the very Life of Jesus Christ Himself.”

Please do not overlook these words. God, at the new – birth experience, rescued you from the domain of darkness (Col. 1:13) and Jesus is now living inside of you. What does that mean? It means we are accepted, secure, and 100% significant. In Adam, we are 0% accepted, 0% rescued, and 0% significant, but that has changed when we were co-crucified. Read the following “Who Am I” last slowly and allow the Holy Spirit to show you your new identity. It goes as follows:

WHO AM I?

I AM ACCEPTED . . .

John 1:12	I am God's child.
John 15:15	I am Christ's friend.
Rom. 5:1	I have been justified.
I Cor. 6:17	I am joined with the Lord, and am one spirit with him.
I Cor. 6:19,20	I am bought with a price, therefore, I belong to God.
I Cor. 12:27	I am a member of Christ's body.
Eph. 1:1	I am a saint.
I Cor. 1:2	
Eph. 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child.
Eph. 2:10	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.
Col. 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
Col. 2:10	I am complete in Christ.

I AM SECURE . . .

Rom. 8:1,2	I am free forever from condemnation.
Rom. 8:31	I am assured that all things work together for good.
Rom. 8:31	I am assured that God is for me.
II Cor. 1:21,22	I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God.
Col. 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God.
Phil. 1:6	I am confident that the good work that God has begun in me will be perfected.
Eph. 1:13	I am sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.
II Tim. 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind.
Heb. 4:16	I can find grace and mercy in time of need.
I John 5:18	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

I AM SIGNIFICANT . . .

Matt. 5:13,14	I am the salt and light of the earth.
John 15:1,5	I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life.
John 15:16	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.
Acts 1:18	I am a personal witness for Christ.
I Cor. 3:16	I am God's temple.
II Cor. 5:18-19	I am a minister of reconciliation for God.
II Cor. 6:1	I am God's co-worker (I Cor. 3:9).
Eph. 2:6	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.
Eph. 2:10	I am God's workmanship.
Eph. 3:12	I may approach God with boldness and confidence because of my faith in Him.
Phil. 4:13	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

My Identity

Satan's Lie

You are a sinner because you sometimes sin

You get your identity from what you have done

You get your identity from what people say

Your behavior tells you what to believe about yourself.

God's Truth

You are a saint (one declared righteous by God) who some-times sins.

You get your identity from what God has done for you.

You get your identity from what God says about you.

Your belief about yourself determines your behavior.

Now, re-read the list again but a little slower and thinking about each statement of identity and applying it to your life and current situation.

Congratulations, you are now on the path to total freedom and victory from bondage and Satan's lies.

Even though I am free from 16 years of clinical depression by discovering and applying these truths I have shared with you, God continues to show me lies I believe as He continues His work of sanctification in my life.

Friend, God's freedom is for everyone and it begins by knowing the meaning of your full name, your temperament and your new identity in Christ. By knowing these areas, you will begin to see and experience God's acceptance, security, and significance for your life and God will either remove your problem – as He removed my 16 years of clinical depression or He will raise you above your problem so that it no longer affects you as before even though it is still present.

My prayer is for each person to experience God's grace and freedom through my testimony. This brief testimony is meant to aid you in discovering God's grace and is not meant to be a full exposition of grace, freedom, identity, or my testimony. If I can be of further help, please contact me.

* Suggested Reading for more information on grace and our identity in Christ:

“*Victory Over the Darkness*” by Neil Anderson

“*The Bondage Breaker*” by Neal Anderson

“*Life Time Guarantee*” by Bill Gillham

“*Grace Land*” by Steve McVey